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"Twilight and Evening Bell"

Robert Caspar Lintner

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TO THOSE WHO JOY in the coming of the twilight and revel in the wonder of the evening silences and the later appearing of the evening star, and who await in joy-filled service the meeting with the Pilot.

PREFACE

Two years ago this interpretation of Crossing the Bar was written, before the author went overseas in the United States Army. Now after a complete revision it is offered in booklet form to the public.

May it come into the hands of many of those who love the coming of evening with its sunset glory and the marvel of the nightly unveiling of God's stars. There is no other time when the wonder of heaven seems to creep more tangibly into the silence of our own souls, and when the heart seems more readily to fall in tune with the vast symphony of God—His plan.

May He seem nearer as you read. And may you have the presence of the Pilot, not shrouded in dim draperies of twilight, unrecognized, but known and beloved in clear recognition and regnant within you in the glory of your own soul.

Robert Caspar Lintner.

Baldwin, Kansas,
February, 1920.

FOREWORD

God has given to some men moments of vision in which they have looked toward the shore-line of heaven's Eternal Homeland and have mounted in the ecstacy of heavenly song.

These men, whatever may have been the age in which they lived and saw and sang, are prophets, divinely inspired to breathe God's messages to His children of earth, in words which they may understand and cherish and by which their souls may be fed and pointed heavenward.

Such a prophet was Alfred Tennyson, great poet prophet of the nineteenth century in England.

Such a song of divinely inspired hope and transcendent faith in eternal love and providence was Crossing the Bar, one of the sublimest poems which God ever gave into the mind of any poet of the English language.

What imagery, what compression of ideas pregnant with thought which challenges the pondering of thoughtful minds!

It is the sea-going song of a great soul who has heard the sounding of the bell for Eternity's sailing and whose heart wells up in boundless faith in his Pilot, whom, having not seen, he yet loves with a boundless love and trusts with a faith quite as unbounded as the ocean upon which he is soon to sail, under His guidance.

Let us follow for a time the suggestio· of his thought and revel in the beauty of his imagery. And perhaps upon us, too, may come some measure of the hope, the love, the unswerving faith, which lived and soared within the heart of Alfred Tennyson as he wrote Crossing the Bar.

CROSSING THE BAR

By Alfred Tennyson

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have cross'd the bar.

"TWILIGHT AND EVENING BELL"

I

"Sunset and evening star"

SUNSET! The glory hour, when a tired world rests in the wonderful loveliness of evening skies flushed and radiant with all the myriad glories which Nature lavishes upon a departing day! Sunrise, be it ever so wonderful, can never soothe and gladden the heart as does the finer hour when the western sky is aflame with all the ineffable splendor of the sunset. Even as the writer of Ecclesiastes once declared that the day of one's death is better than the day of one's birth, so is the hour of the day's dying fraught with glory which speaks to the tired heart a message of reward and glad fruition, whereas the radiance of dawn had given but hope and cheer.

The being who can look with dispassionate calm upon the glory of a sunset is unspeakably poor in ability to appreciate the best and loveliest things of earth. Shakespeare held that the one who has not music in his soul is fit only for the unworthy things of life. Music appeals to those refinements of soul which appreciate and love and take to themselves the harmonies, the pulsing rhythms and the sweet melodies of sound. Those refined qualties of soul do but translate the harmonies, the rhythms, the cadences of sound and song into harmonies, rhythms and melodies which are already at home in the appreciative heart that so hears and understands and assimilates and grows. He who truly appreciates the beauties of the sunset will grow in asthetic sense, in ability to see and comprehend and love the grandest things of Nature. He who has not these quatities of appreciation should lose no time in acquiring them as wholly as he may. For Shakespeare might have added as truly that he who cannot sense the loveliness of a sunset is fit for unblinking entrance into any crime.

For who, that might not sense the

harmonies in man's efforts at music, should not be able to sense the presence of perfect harmonies in Nature's faultless blendings of sunset tints? Or who, that might not feel the rhythm of the song of even a Jenny Lind, should not be conscious of the delicate and pervasive shadings of colors in the sunset? Or what one, who might fail utterly in appreciation of the melody in a lullaby of one of the old masters, might not stand speechless in wonder in the presence of the loveliness of the evening lullaby with which Nature soothes to rest her tired children of forest and sea and prairie stretch?

Have you seen films of finest azure and ribbons of downy white drift across the crimson glow at the heart of the sunset? And have you seen the slow and silent blending of orange with deep rose and the change of saffron into gentian, or of turquoise into sapphire? Perchance you have seen opalescent cloud fringes glow into ruby which deepened to light amethyst. Have you not wondered then at the deft and inexplicable skill of the One who limns the varying shades of the evening sunset? And have you not wondered how

any human heart could remain unmoved before the wonder shown in it all? Truly a man with such a heart, though he were a Croesus of earth, would be a Lazarus in his lack of the sublimest qualities of spiritual appreciations.

In the midst of such inspiring loveliness, picture a great poet soul. Imagine the far-seeing eye of his spiritual discernment gazing intently out across the vast, silent, unknown ocean which stretches out and away toward the curtain of the sunset, beyond which he fain would see the shores of the great Homeland. Fancy his heart throbbing with the holiest emotions of the human soul, unscarred by the bitter lacerations of blind doubt or of fear. Perceive that in his innermost consciousness is an undaunted purpose to press out and away to the Unseen Land which lies beyond the sunset seas, there to search out peace and sustaining joy in the Land of the Eternal Dawn, where are no grief nor pain nor dying. Behold his clear prophet eyes rapt in their vision of eternal day and its endless rapture, until the tears of joy dim his sight and a glad song stirs within his heart, which throbs in exultant glad-

ness and in compelling desire to set that song to the music of words which shall never die. Let us call that prophet Tennyson, and his glad song Crossing the Bar.

"Sunset and evening star".

And evening star! A star of hope that is beyond and above the sunset. A star it is, which, like the bright Star of Bethlehem at the first glad Christmastide, shines radiantly in a cheery message of eternal peace among men of good will, through the matchless grace of Jesus the Christ.

What a message of cheer is there in the faint glimmering of that first star which dots the blue of the evening sky! The sunset glow has faded, and the deep blue of the western sky shows scarcely a trace of its late glory. Here and there a fleecy bit of cloud drifts across or above the portion of the sky where before had been the wonder of the sunset. And now, faint at first, and then whitening slowly into a definite point of light, the star of evening seems to step forth from the azure portals of heaven and beckon to un-

seen myriads of tiny followers who are soon to appear in lesser beauty.

It is as though the spirits of the Great World of the Eternally Living had flocked earthward to guard their dear ones of earth during the night silences, and one had outflown the others and had been the first to part the tapestries of heaven.

It is as though the first bud of the springtime had slipped out through the matted leaves and into the sunlight, and then, assured of the welcome of air and sun, had nodded its welcoming encouragement to the timid troop of blossoms-to-be, which still lingered in slumber or hid half shyly among the grass and leaves.

It is as though the first tone, faint almost to inaudibility, had sounded—nay, drifted—out from the lute or oboe of some great hidden orchestra. And then, as here and yonder a faint glimmer of light discloses the appearing of another and yet another star, it is as though another and still another voice of the great hidden orchestra—here the sweet, plaintive modulations of a muted violin, and there the fuller resonance of a wood-wind—had

joined in the softly swelling volume of harmony which was soon to become the great throbbing symphony of night.

Who has not stood speechless and with bared soul before the indescribable beauty and majesty of the nightly unfolding of the star world? How finite is man in his little corner of a mighty universe, as he looks out upon an unexplored galaxy of flaming suns and luminous planets which dot the stellar spaces beyond our moon, and realizes, as a thinking man must realize, how infinitely beyond his present ken is the illimitable power of the Eternal Creator, in whose hands the farthest suns and their unseen followers are as playthings in the giant clockwork of God's infinity! What denizens of unknown worlds may be looking upon this great nightly wonder and offering their heart paeans of silent gratitude and awe and worship to the same God whom we worship? We cannot sense the majesty and the power of the Creator, in whose hands the evening star is but a common jewel.

The evening star symbolizes hope, peace, joy, love. It symbolizes hope because it bears bright promise of a night

which shall be alight with heaven's guardians, and of a new day which shall come in a glory of dawning akin to the sunset which has faded. The star symbolizes peace because it ushers in the silence of a tranquil night, wherein the weary of earth may lie down to rest, ere the coming of the toil of another day. The star symbolizes joy, because heaven is glad in the nightly ministry of light in darkness, and because the people of earth have gratitude for the good of the day and the repose of the night, and are glad for the beauty of the silent, guarding stars. The star of evening symbolizes love, because the heart of the Eternal Father is athrob with love for his children of earth, and He has set His ministering angels to guard them during the night.

Do we wonder that the poet heart of Tennyson, as he felt the brooding calm of the evening silences, the glory of the sunset's spell and the silent grandeur of the later appearing of the evening star, was attuned to the melodies of heavenly song?

Such a heart, so moved, must see and

feel and speak in terms of living music.

"And one clear call for me!"

The call of heaven. The summons of eternal song and to the living glory of eternal light. The day is closing. Life, yearned for, sought after, at once the scene of hopes and fears and triumphs and bereavements, is fast coming to its hour of closing. In one brief hour the delights and the tears of earth will be gone forever for that heart. For the call has come. Mortal cannot but heed. Heaven has summoned and earth must yield its flower to blossom, forever unplucked, in the unfading gardens of God's Glory Land, where is no scourage of sun by day nor of frost by night. There eternal joy is, for there the immortal soul, wrested from its clay mould, is set to blossom at its full, in the living sunlight of God's eternal presence.

And the call is

" . . . . . for me!"

No one else may hear the ringing clearness of the call at this time. Others about may not not know its sound. Their sum-

mons may come in the noon-time, in the morning's break or in the midnight watches of a coming to-morrow. But just now it is the hour of evening and one soul, alone with his God and with the silence of the eventide, has heard the summons of heaven.

The summons is individual and so must be the response. No one else may follow its leading at this time into the light of the eternal day. Earthly friends, who would joy in the giving of their lives and their all for the one to whom the summons has come, must stand apart and watch while the one who is called prepares for his voyage. That one, attended only by his Pilot, must put out from shore and enter upon that voyage from which his little craft will never return.

His brave spirit prays, even as he contemplates his sailing:

"And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home."

It is to be a voyage over unknown, un

fathomed seas. Out beyond the harbor bar stretch the billowing waves of uncharted waters. Happy is the one whose bark on such seas may have the guidance of the Pilot of Unknown Seas. His calm word can still the fury of the lashing tempests, even as His voice quieted the angry waves on the Sea of Galilee. And His presence can make glad and companionable the dark hours wherein the soul sets sail across the bar. What a Friend is this Pilot of earth-weary, tempest-driven souls, who cheers and guides and counsels as the little craft, with His hands at the wheel, slips out and away over the nearer waters!

But what means this singer who prays

"..... there be no moaning of the bar"?

It is the moaning of waves which lash in driving breakers over the harbor bar. It is the low tide. Beneath those angry heaps of foaming wave lie the sharp pinnacles and the rounded boulders upon the concealed masses of which the pilgrim ship may be driven to wreck. There is no beacon light to warn the voyager, nor is there the tempest-muffled clanging of a

bell which may warn away with its jangled tones the one who drives thither over a merciless sea. Only the moaning of the bar sounds as Nature's warning to beware and steer aside. But the voyager may be powerless, in the rush of the tempest, to heed even that warning.

It is not strange that a soul should pray that in his hour of sailing there may

> " . . . . . be no moaning of the bar".

The anxious soul prays that there may be, rather,

> " . . .. . such a tide as moving seems asleep,
> Too full for sound and foam,
> "When that which drew from out the boundless deep
> Turns again home."

Such a tide as moving seems asleep! How beautifully expressive is that of calm mightiness, of unfathomed depth, of power that vaunts not itself in needless show nor in strident tumult. "Still water runs deep" is but the proverbmonger's way of saying that the deep, the truly great and noble and profoundly wise are silent about themselves. It is the shallow stream which is fretted into ripples by

every little pebble in its bed. It is the little man of shallow mind who is perturbed into turmoil by every adversity, every obstacle, every dissenting or faithless voice. The ocean minds not pebbles. They are broken and smoothed and polished by it in its onrush. The great man is not hindered or harmed by the slight obstacles which are themselves broken and smoothed by his unheeding progress over them. To the man of really great mind the trifling obstacles to his thought and efforts are as rock to be crushed and used to macadam the highway over which he strides to his goal.

Too full for sound and foam! The rocks lie deep beneath the calm surface of the deep waters. There is no sound of tempest, of waves beating, beating, beating upon the rocks. There is no foam of crest crushed against crest. All is silent, unruffled, unending sea.

It is as a man whose heart is crushed beneath the weight of grief or whose mind is conscious only of the greatness of his thought and recks not of the passing distractions of the moment. Such a mind, conscious of its own power and busy with

its own absorbing interests, would be indeed

"Too full for sound and foam".

But where is the secret of this depth, of this tranquillity, of thought and purpose and action which are

"Too full for sound and foam"?

We read the secret here:

"When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home."

From out the vast bosom of the great deep the waters have drifted, drifted, drifted shoreward, even as they seemed to sleep, and now that they have lapped for a time upon the low stretches of the shore, they are again putting out to sea—turning again home—home—to the vast stretches of water which extend out and out and away until they play gently upon the shores of the Better Land and lap in strains of celestial music upon the golden strands where the angel spirits are wont to tread.

The boundless deep! Boundless, save where it compasses the little island of Now

and meets again the endless shores of Eternity. The boundless deep! How suggestive these words are of the vastness of the waters over which plies the frail little bark of the soul! What opportunity is there, in all that vastness, for finding the Better Shore? How infinite in number are the chances for steering the course wrongly!

Oh, for the hand of the Pilot who has sailed the deep before and has knowledge of the way to the Better Land! With His hand upon the wheel there can be no disaster. No night is too dark for the keenness of His vision. He knows the perils, the hidden reefs, the rocks which lie concealed and the paths where the glaciers drift beneath the surface of the waters. Without Him no voyager can steer safely into the Port of the Homeland.

For the voyager, as well as the tide, is returning home. He, too, has drawn from out the boundless deep, the limitless expanses of the Eternity of the yesterdays, which merges and is at one with the Eternity of to-day and of the unnumbered to-morrows.

Eternity! Home—eternal home—of the

immortal soul, which is the everliving Creator's highest handicraft! Eternity! From the time that God first was, it has been, and so long as God shall live, so long will Eternity be, in unending cycles of recurring æons.

The boundless deep! How better could we describe the Land of unending, eternally begun To-day? The boundless deep! Boundless it is in its never-ending reaches. Deep it is, beyond the fathoming power of men or of angels. Only the mind of God the omnipotent Creator can know its expanse and fathom its depth.

Now the weary traveller of earth

"Turns again home."

Yet with what reluctant steps! Friends will come to the water's brink and will wave their farewells as the little bark slips slowly away into the horizon. But there will be tears, and hearts will ache in the bitterness of grief. There may be hope of a meeting again on the other shore. But the way is long and unknown, and tempests may drive the little craft far from its haven. And sometimes—oh, terrible thought!—there is not the presence of the

Pilot, to guide the voyager out beyond the bar and away over the unknown waters. Uncharted depths stretch away before the frail craft in forbidding mockery of the benighted and presumptuous soul who dares to set out alone on lonely seas of night. The parting is hard enough when the soul sets sail with the Pilot. How hopeless and tearful is the sailing of one who puts out to sea alone and in utter ignorance of his course! Oh, that he might have with him the wonder and the gladness of the presence of the Pilot!

But our singer has this Pilot. For him, then, the voyage will be safe, for he is truly turning again home, and with One who knows the course.

Home! The unremembered haven of Eternity, whence once his tiny craft bore him, all unknowing, to the strand of the isle of Time, from which he is now to depart as he sets out again for the Homeland. Home! Haven of souls weary of earth and tempestuous seas! Home of eternal spirits whose joy is in the presence and the service of the King! The home of God and His ministering angels and of earth-weary souls turned again home!

How joy-filled will be the heart of him who descries, across the vast undulations of foaming wave stretches, the strand of the Eternal Homeland, great Isle of the Unending Day, filled ever with joy and song and love and glad service, and made eternally bright and beautiful by the presence of the Light of Eternity!

Happy with indescribable bliss will be the voyager whose eyes shall view the shore-line fringed with those who in rapture await his coming, and whose ears shall hear, above the lapping of the waves, the sweet music of Eternity. But even greater bliss will be his when he shall feel his heart glow in growing rapture with the conscious presence of the Pilot.

II

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!"

Twilight! The hour when earth's day slips away into night, and the tired world rests from the day's cares and labors. It is the hour of gloaming, when shadows deepen and silence weighs more heavily upon the bosom of earth. It is the hour of silent reverie, when the soul, still awed by the day's dying, feels the descending pall of darkness and the call to holy and reverent thought. Then the myriad lights of heaven become visible to us, as if to compensate us for the passing of the sunlight, and, with their charm, to draw our thoughts away from the visible things of earth to the hidden things of heaven.

And evening bell! It is the bell which marks the coming of evening. It is a warning of the approach of darkness. The evening bell is the harbinger of rest and silence and sleep that knows naught un-

til the hour of waking. With Tennyson. the evening bell symbolizes the soul's summons to pass throught night to the hour of unending morning. It marks the approach of the end of things finite and earthly, after and beyond which is to be the eternal glory of things infinite and surpassingly heavenly. It heralds the coming of the hour when man is to quit earth for heaven, and relinquish his earthly dross for the pure, refined gold of heaven—when man's spirit passes from its little house of clay to a mansion heavenly and eternal. So men may hear a note of hope in the ringing of the evening bell, as it summons them to pass through night to the new Day beyond.

How reluctantly the play-weary child lays aside his toys and goes to his bed at night! He knows that the morrow may bring long hours for play, not in shadow but in light, and yet the present moments of the day's play are very precious to him. The joy of the play of the day-to-be is eclipsed by the prolonged pleasure of the twilight that is. So men, hearing the ringing of the bell that summons them to the passing to the blissful moments of Eter-

nity's unending day, yet draw back for a few more moments with their toys in the gathering dusk of their dying hour. And as children dread the coming of the night-time and shrink in terror from the darkened room which lies between them and their new day of happiness, so men are wont to dread the approach of the night of their life, and shrink in mute terror from the oncoming darkness which screens from them the beauty and the joy of their new Eternal Day. The unfading light of heaven's day is less vivid to them than is the growing darkness of their eventide. They shrink back in the dark of their own little room, the scene of their day's joys and sorrows, rather than pass out joyfully into the spell of God's grand evening, there to place their hands in His and journey out with Him through the gathering gloom to the glory of their heavenly mansion.

Yet childhood, happy in the day's joys and untutored in fear of the darkness, may approach its bed with simple thankfulness for the day and its joys, and with confident trustfulness may look forward to the coming happiness of a new day.

Even so men, grateful and happy because of life's blessings from God, and untrammeled by fear of the night of death, may with gratitude view the approach of their night as that which is to bring them to their new day, and may look forward with confident trustfulness to the coming bliss of the time when Eternity's dawn will lie upon their horizon.

How happy is such a soul, for whom the night has no terror, because of knowledge that beyond lies the Day, wherein the Master will company with him and hold tryst! What melodies of heaven play already within his heart! Already his soul rises in sublime song as it senses afresh the divine harmonies of Eternity and those wonderful melodies in which it once joyed. Truly for him death has no sting! He recks not of death nor of the grave, for his hand is already within his Pilot's and the night has grown bright with the harbingers of heaven's light and beauty. Life's first page is turned. Beyond lie new chapters unread, in which the sublime story unfolds under the skillful touch of the Master. Upon the bursted bud are the dew-drops, where to-morrow the sun

will work magic growth, until the full-blown flower is expanded in its mature loveliness, to receive new glories from the Master's palette throughout the aeons.

Is there sorrow in this? If there be sorrow in glad growth, if there be sadness in joyous attainment to perfect bloom, if there be grief in eternal song and the exultant sweep of joyous halleluiahs, then is there sorrow—much sorrow—in death. But if light be beautiful and if exultant singing be gladness and if the coming at last to consummate perfection be helpful and holy, then is death a beautiful, a joyous, a holy transforming, in which the brittle clay is struck off and the immortal stands revealed in imperishable grandeur of loveliness.

What matters it to such a soul that with the clear tones of the evening bell he is conscious that there is

" . . . . after that the dark"?

Aye, what matters that? Truly it is the dark; yet he knows that the dark cannot long hide the dawn of the undying Day. The dark will be brief at the most, and the light of dawn will seem only the

brighter. And even in the darkness this soul will know the watchful guidance of the Light of Life.

It is not strange that he cries,

"And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark".

Why should there be sadness at his going? Sadness and grief will be lost and forgotten in the bliss of the other shore. There will be farewells here, surely. But the poet, brave in the fortitude of love and unfailing trust, and conscious that there shall be no sadness in his own heart, hopes for like fortitude and its attendant peace and confidence in the hearts of those friends of earth who will gather at the water's brink to wait and watch until his vessel has dipped below their horizon. His voyage will be safe. The Pilot is with him. Tears and sadness will only harrow his heart at the parting. His soul, soon to be rapt in the light and the eternal bliss of heaven, needs not now to be clouded by the gloom of sadness. And sympathizing friends who watch need not bewail the sailing of one who voyages with the Pilot to the Homeland, for his lot is

soon to be happier by far than is theirs. But they should joy in easing for him the difficulty of the parting with dear ones, and in comforting their own hearts with the hope that he will reach the Haven in safety and that they will meet him there a little later in the eternal morning which he is soon to know and enjoy.

"When I embark".

There is a note of simple faith and determined purpose in that quiet declaration of sailing. It is as though an experienced mariner spoke of a new cruise to oft-frequented shores. There is no quaver of voice, no wavering of purpose, no lurking note of uneasiness or of gnawing fear. He is to sail, and bravely.

Indeed, it is quite likely that he has put out to those unknown shores often, in imagined sailings in his own thought, when his spirit has set free its pinions in hopeful anticipation. Although he knows not where lie those shores from which he has been released for a time for his earthly journey and which he has sought often in his imagination since, yet his heart has

no fear of missing the Haven, nor of conflict with tempests, nor of being lost in uncertain darkness. He will put out to sea without fear or doubt, but with unfaltering trust in his Pilot and with a simple prayer to the great Ruler of seas and havens.

"For, though from out our bourne of time and place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have cross'd the bar."

Our bourne of time and place! How beautifully expressive is that name for his place of earthly pilgrimage, and ours! Our bourne, our haven, our country, our harbor, a little, quiet resting-place beside the great Sea that stretches out toward Eternity! Our harbor of time, whereas the Homeland to which we set sail, knows an endless eternity. Our harbor of place—of place finite, sorrow-thronged, colored with the changing passions of mortal lives in joy or weeping. Our harbor of place—a narrow haven, on either side of which the billows beat unceasingly. Within its narrow bounds are heard the varying sounds of human life, and within its

borders are the crimes, the indifference and the altruism which mortal men express in their daily lives.

"The flood may bear me far".

The flood—the unceasing flow of that vast expanse which separates us from Eternity. It is not a tranquil river nor a smooth, charted sea, but a vast flood which flows and has flowed from the very morning of creation, and which will continue to sweep on in unbroken strength and grandeur until the very farthest moment of Eternity.

The soul knows not how far may be his sailing upon that flood. We know not how far or how near may be the Eternity to which, sooner or later, we must all go. Nearer than we imagine may be the shore-line of the Eternal Homeland. We must believe that it is the matter of distance with which Tennyson is concerned in whatever of uncertainty he may show here, when he says

"The flood may bear me far".

It is not that he fears that the unre-

strained flood may bear his little bark amiss while his Pilot guides, or that the flood, though tempest-lashed, may bear him so far that his Pilot cannot take him at last safely over the harbor bar and into the quiet Haven of the Homeland. To have such fears would be to doubt his Pilot. But Tennyson does not doubt Him.

"The flood may bear me far".

It may seem that there is a degree of uncertainty here in the mind of the poet. But he knows that beyond the cloud rims is the unfailing radiance of the sun, and that after the dark of eventide and the pall of midnight come the majestic glow of the dawn and the full glory of bright noonday, if it be God's will that another day should dawn. Our poet reaches out in faith which rises triumphant over all dominion of night and evil, and, in mighty belief, lays hold upon the God of day and goodness eternal.

"I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

I hope! Aye, that is as the dawn's first gleaming. It is light which darts through

the darkness and tints the horizon with the first glad glow of coming realization. I hope! The obscuring cloud is about to be riven and dissolved by the full glare of the sun behind it, and light—full, intense, all-pervading—is to burst through that which was once the gloom of cloud. It is as though a blind man, groping for the hem of the Master's garment, feels the mists melt from before his eyes at the music of the words of the One who spoke as none other has ever spoken. It is as though a mariner, straining his eyes at the lookout's post on the mast, sees the horizon flame into light at the kindling of the lamp in the tower above the crags.

"I hope to see my Pilot face to face".

There is the possessive pronoun, first person, singular. My! For he, like all other souls who sail toward Eternity, may claim as his the Pilot—the good Guide of needy souls who sail the great main. And with what pride and joy may he claim Him as his! For once He sailed this same expanse of sea, in order that other men might sail the better and might come at last, through His piloting, into the glad

Haven of Souls. And in the sailing He gave His life. Only in invisible, spirit form does He now direct the course of the voyager to the Beautiful Haven.

"I hope to see my Pilot face to face".

What joy it will be to see the One who has steered the ship safely into its haven. To see Him! Yes, and to thank Him and to offer eternal allegiance to Him in service upon the shores of the Better Land; to know Him and love Him; to be with Him; to walk and talk and dine with Him; to commune with Him hourly; to sit and listen under the spell of the sacred voice which shamed demons into flight and made the lame to leap in joy and caused the blind and the sick to resume their ways with sight and health, and made even the dead to come forth from the silence of the tomb!

For the meeting and the eternal communion with Him will be

" . . . face to face".

It will not be at that time in the silence of printed words on pages which perish

with turning, nor in the memory of voices whose music may hush within the chambers of our consciousness, nor yet in the lineaments of features limned for a time within the gallery of the mind but doomed to fade into indistinctness. Rather, it will be unending heart communion—face to face, hour by hour, day by day, centuries upon centuries—with Him whom neither death nor mortal life might hold, because His home is in the ageless morning of Eternity.

Face to face with Him who is the sublime consumation of all love, all duty and service, all perfection! Face to face with Him who is the very Light of Heaven and the consummate personification of its love! To learn forever and always of Him! To be instructed in the attaining to perfection such as that to which He attained, and in the doing of all duty and in the performing of all noble service, even as He performed duty and service! Shall not all these things be in our conception of the glad Homeland?

Tennyson does not go beyond this in his delineation of the delights of that Shore to which he knows that his bark

will bear him. Perhaps that one thought, that one realization of Eternity-long presence with the Christ of Galilee, was ample to still all anxiety and unrest and even any regret which Tennyson may have felt at thought of the sailing. It may be that this was the naming of a joy which was the anticipation and the epitome of other joys which the poet might have hesitated to name. We may not know as to that. But it is certain that this one great hope, this one great eternal joy tasted and made his in anticipation, was sufficient to quench all risings of doubt and dark uncertainty within his mind, and to fill him and thrill him anew with a great, vital certainty of hope already realized, as he calmly and hopefully faced the time of his sailing. It may even be that his great heart longed, even in that moment of solemn thought of his going, to set out across the unknown waters to the Land where such wonderful happiness was to be his forever.

"When I have cross'd the bar."

It is only when he shall have crossed the bar that Tennyson expects the true real-

ization of this great happiness of communing face to face with his Pilot. It might seem that he feels that he may not see his Pilot, who is also your Pilot and my Pilot, until he has crossed the bar. It may be that in the night of sailing there will not be opportunity for seeing the benign face of the One who is to guide his bark out to sea and then at last into the Beautiful Haven of Souls. Or it may be that the Pilot will choose to reveal the beauty of His face only in the light of Eternity. Be that as it may, the soul may see his Pilot face to face when he has

" . . . . cross'd the bar."

The bar—the outlying danger-point for ships that sail toward the Haven. It is the place where the rocks and the sunken reefs endanger prow and keel. Only the Pilot knows where it can be crossed safely. He knows where the shallows lie and where the trustworthy channels cut through the treacherous forms, and where the deep currents sweep unhindered through and on to safety.

Each ship, each soul, must cross the bar. It stretches out before the unending shore-

line of Eternity. The soul who endeavors to steer his own course through the reefs and the shallows and among the hidden rocks of the bar cannot hope to reach the shores of the Homeland in safety. The Pilot must be aboard and in command. His hand must direct the wheel and His voice must command the setting of the sails. Happy beyond expression is the soul whose sailing lies in His hands. That soul may with unruffled calm of spirit look forward gladly to the moment of his embarking and to the joy of the hour when his feet shall touch the golden sands of the Other Shore, where he shall see, face to face, and in His ineffable beauty, unmarred by the tempest's gale or the fury of storm-lashed seas, the great Pilot of Eternity's unending ocean.

Great Pilot of life's sea, watch thou against the hour of my sailing. May it be attended with simple, trustful joy, rather than with grief which would shadow my trust in thee. Be thou near when the farewells are said. And when the tide goes out and the wind gathers in force within the swelling sails, be thy hand upon the

wheel, to guide my bark safely over the nearer bar and out into the flood of waters. May the lashings of the tempest be quieted by a word from thee, even as the prattling of an erring child is shamed into silence by the gentle pleading of a mother's voice. May the night be calm yet vibrant with the wonder of thy spirit presence. And when I near the Homeland guide thou me across the bar and safely into the joyous Haven of Eternity. Then shall I in rapture behold the transcendent beauty of thy face, and with thee, and with all the blessed host of those in the Homeland, shall I enjoy endless communion,

"When I have cross'd the bar."

"Twilight and Evening Bell"

Robert Caspar Lintner

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